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September 29, 2020

Deacon Ordination Reshaped for Communion and Connection

Highland has called ten men and women by the church to serve as spiritual leaders. On Wednesday evening, September 30, at 7:00 p.m., we will ordain our newly elected deacons. The worship service will be streamed on our Facebook and YouTube pages, setting them forth to serve in ministry, to provide spiritual discernment, and to walk faithfully in community with others.

Please pray for those being ordained (Randy Biery, Rob Burke, Christy Chesnut, Deborah Keeling, Erin Phelps) and those being installed (Troy Burden, Vi Chatmon, Ginger Miller, Bill Ockerman, Alan Spade).

We want our faith community to be involved! On Sunday, October 4, worship at Highland will take place as a drive round event in our parking lot between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.! Please enter in the alley from Everett Ave. Staff will be present to direct you through our parking lot which will have two lines to help the flow of cars. We invite you to come participate in worship in several ways that morning.

- **Share a word of blessing:** As we cannot conduct our tradition of laying hands on those being ordained, we invite you to write a word of blessing, affirmation, and encouragement for Randy, Rob, Christy, Deborah, and Erin.
- **Receive communion:** Newly ordained deacons will be standing by to offer communion for World Communion Sunday.
- **Bring your pledge:** Faithful Giving begins our month of making commitments to fund the 2021 year of ministry through Highland. Bring your card with you as a tangible act of worship and giving.
- **Faith Formation Bags:** Families with children are invited to attend and receive their faith formation bag for October and November!
- **Give:** The Friday Church Ministry Group is collecting items for Wayside Christian Mission, including razors, socks, and toiletry items. Please consider bringing a few items that we can share with our friends at Wayside to show our love and support in this time when we can't gather at Friday Church face to face.

Meet with Mary Alice - New Dates Available

I am loving my times meeting the Highland family face to face, and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the days to come. Please be assured that I will continue opening up more meeting times each week! I will continue to do this throughout the fall until I am able to meet with everyone. To schedule a time to meet with me, visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4CA9AC23A0F9C34-meet2>. Please note that I will need to meet at Highland (socially distant and masked inside or outside) on weekdays during



office hours. On weeknights or weekends, I am happy to meet offsite and come to your front porch/back porch, have you over to mine, or meet at another outside space. Know how much I value this time with you, friends! I hope to learn your stories, to discover what you value most deeply about Highland, to listen to your concerns or questions about the future, and to hear your hopes and dreams for our faith community as we journey together in the days ahead. ~ *Mary Alice*

Gathering Our Financial Commitments for 2021 This October

This past week, you should have received a letter from us as well as a pledge brochure. Did you notice all of those beautiful Highland faces?! Even when we are apart, we remember that Highland is us!

Even as we continue on through 2020, we are already turning our body, mind and spirit toward 2021. It can be a challenge to think about the future when our days right now are so full, and yet we hope it will be an exercise in seeking hope and wonder and curiosity about what God might be calling us to do next year.

October will serve as our month of discernment and commitment to fund God's work through our congregation. We will specifically focus on these financial commitments on Sunday, October 4, 11 and 18, with continued stories of why people in our congregation feel compelled to give money to this work of love.

- We encourage you to bring your pledge card with you to the drive through event on October 4, 10:00 a.m.-12 noon, where we will have a station for you to place your pledge in a basket.
- You can fill out your pledge [online](#).
- You can mail your pledge card back to the church.

If you have your tithe or offering as an automatic draft with your bank, please fill out a pledge card and update it for us.

If you have never pledged before, there could not be a better time to start, as more information helps us plan more accurately.

If you are concerned about certainty in your commitment, do the best you can knowing that if life changes in drastic ways, you can update your pledged commitment at any time.

With hope for the year ahead, ~ *The Faithful Giving Ministry Group*

[Click here to set up your 2021 pledge online!](#)

Who Tells Your Story, THIS Thursday, Zoom Link is Here

The Young Adult Ministry invites all members of our community to participate in a night of welcome and storytelling for our new pastor, Mary Alice Birdwhistell, on this Thursday, October 1, at 6:00 p.m.

During this pandemic season, we want to share all the ways in which our community has transcended beyond our building to love and support one another through the years. Plan to join us for this unique event as it will be another way for us collectively to introduce Mary Alice to our congregation.

The story-telling event will happen via zoom. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84337424581>. Meeting ID: 843 3742 4581

Our story tellers will be Jennifer Neyhart, Mary Burks, Anita Roper, Lillian Glover, Bill Campbell, Reece and Sandy Little, and Sally Evans.

Dear Highland,

Many of you have reached out to me in the trouble of these days...trouble for our city and nation, trouble in our own hearts and minds, trouble as we seek to absorb what swirls around and within us.

"What is our next best step as individuals and as a congregation?" Mary Alice asked this in her sermon last Sunday, and you have subsequently asked me through a variety of platforms. What a wonderful question! One that we can trust God to help us consider.

Might we provide sanctuary to protestors? Might we collect bottled water and snacks for those at Injustice Square? Might we have a note-a-day that offers us ways to respond? Might we speak out publicly on various issues that are negatively affecting marginalized people in our community?

Thank you so much for these questions. It is humbling and powerful to know that you are a church taking seriously the call to follow Jesus.

Rather than offer quick answers or overly simplistic solutions, I write to share that you are not alone in your wonderings about how to offer support. And I want you to know that your congregational leadership and ministers here are considering how best to move forward as a church, as the body of Christ where each of us are free to contribute our gifts and passions in ways that build up the good of the whole.

If you have ideas and energy around how we might mobilize, please feel free to keep reaching out to me and our leadership. I welcome the chance to hear from you. One reality to consider is the challenge for us white folk to decenter ourselves. The demands for justice that come from Black Lives Matter and others are not our, Highland Baptist's own demands. They come to us from those who are marginalized and whose dignity has been stripped.

Therefore, in the responses we might offer as Highland's collective voice, we do well to turn first to our siblings of color for guidance and to know better what the needs are at any given moment. We do not expect from them education about systemic racism—that is our work to do without further taxing communities of color. Instead, we look to them with a listening posture in order to seek clarity on when we speak and when we stay silent. This is not a clear-cut path. We will stumble, and we may fall down a time or two, or a bunch. But we will together humbly dust off our knees and keep moving forward.

The Mission and Justice Ministry Group and the Anti-Racism Team will gather soon to consider options. Further, I expect that Ministry Council will need, and want, to weigh in on some of our ideas. I know this might feel like a frustrated or slow response; for in the meantime protests continue, tax returns are revealed, NTI with our children happens five days a week, full-time jobs demand our attention, loneliness threatens our well-being, and COVID-19 appears relentless.

Thank you in advance for your patience coupled with our collective urgency. This is the movement of the Spirit, for which Mary Alice and I beckoned in our statement last week. May we discern together what is Highland's work of justice and love—just like or vision statement dreams. Finally, thank you for all the ways that you lift up the church, these ministries, and God's people in your

prayers. May each of us hold fast to our faith and hope in the God who journeys with us. Love, ~
Lauren Jones Mayfield

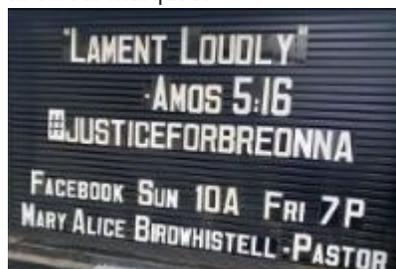
Please Note:

All in-person services, activities, meetings and events at Highland Baptist Church are cancelled until further notice.

Highland's Word To Our Community

... on NPR: ...continuing to nurture our faith community with Friday and Sunday worship services available on Facebook and YouTube.

... on our marquee:



Staying Connected Outside These Walls

As we live through these days where we are rarely, if ever, physically connected with each other we make use of technology to bridge some of the gaps that exist between us. Below are some of the ways that you may use to stay connected to the community of Highland Baptist Church:

Worship from the sanctuary on our Facebook page at 7:00 p.m. on Friday nights and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. These streams also appears on our YouTube page.

Bible study & children's gatherings via Zoom. Several adult Bible study classes and Pastor Renee are gathering weekly via Zoom which allows connectivity via computer or phone. If your child would like to connect, email Renee. If your Bible study class would like to begin meeting this way, email Carol at carol@hbclouisville.org or Walter at walter@hbclouisville.org.

Mission Corner

Joining our Public Work of Love

Folks gathered on Wednesday and Friday evening at the corner of Grinstead Drive and Cherokee Road to support Black Lives Matter, those who protest, and our call to side with the oppressed. Please join us on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.



Mission and Justice on Facebook

There is a Highland Facebook public group called "Missions and Justice Opportunities." Do you know about it? Click the button below to join the group. We will utilize this space more frequently to dialogue, share events and opportunities around town, and to stand in solidarity with others.

[I want to join Highland's "Missions and Justice Opportunities"!](#)

Friday Church Corner

We would love to have you join us for:

“Let Your Spirit Sing”

When: Saturday, October 10, 4:00 p.m. (weather permitting)

Where: At Highland Baptist Church in the parking lot

Masks and Social Distancing Required.

You may bring your own chair or sit in one of ours.

What: The Friday Church Band will be leading us as we put our fear in the backseat and lift our Spirit and the Spirit of others through sharing, encouraging, and connecting.



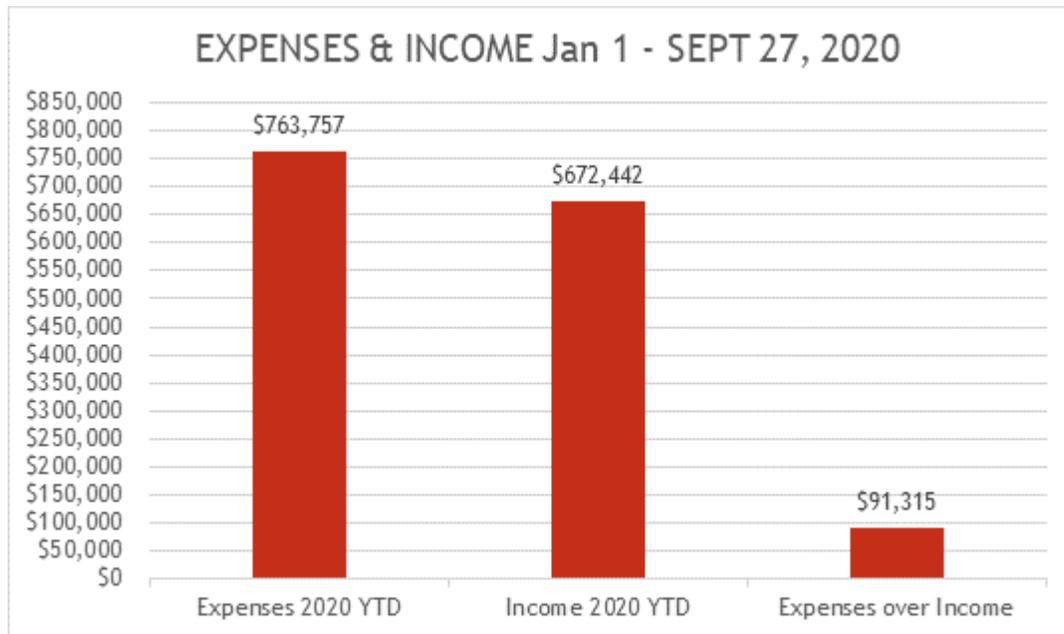
Church Business Corner

Finance Report

Finance Ministry Group will begin to provide a weekly update on our finances. We will provide highlights with bullet points along with a graph.

- A reminder that the vast majority of our expenses continue even as we are not meeting in person.
- Through September 27, 2020 expenses are \$91,315 over our income.
- Pledged Income is at 94.6%

In the weeks ahead, we will provide an estimate of expenses for the remainder of the year and the income needed to ensure that we meet those expenses.



Ministry Council Report

The Ministry Council held their monthly meeting on September 14, 2020. On the agenda the following items were presented and discussed. The question raised by Jeff Grey at our Quarterly Church Conference was discussed following Jeff's presentation to the committee. Concerns were raised regarding the application for and receipt of the Payroll Protection Program offered by the Small Business Administration as to whether proper procedure had been followed and the absence of church input. In our discussion, it was found that per trustees there was no violation of our church by-laws, but that there is a gap in clarifying our processes and procedures regarding applying for a non-collateral load that if criteria

are met, reverts to a grant. This will be addressed immediately by the Ministry Council and Finance Ministry Group. In addition, and more directly it was noted that as a congregation it would be helpful to have an educational series in the near future to explain the Baptist distinctive of separation of church and state and its theological implications.

The Anti-Racism Ministry Team brought two recommendations to Ministry Council following last month's presentation. These recommendations were a new job description for the new members of the Anti-Racism Ministry Team and the recommendation that Nancy Goodhue be named to serve as co-chair with Maurice Blanchard. The purpose of this task force would be to research ways in conjunction with other community antiracism voices in which we as a community of faith can expand our focus on reparations to see how we might look at a life style of reparations in order to be able to speak and live profetically.

A time was spent in discussion regarding the use of our building during the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the continued rate of Covid-19, it is believed that meeting in the church is not a prudent action at this time. However, some discussion around small groups meeting and following CBC guidelines of masking and social distancing may be considered.

The financial report was given and noted that through August, our expenses are \$80,000.00 over our income. Pledged income continues to remain at 94%, though our undesignated giving is very much below average. As the pandemic continues, we continue to see a decrease and drop in income. The recommendation was made that the financial report be included in our weekly newsletter.

Our Deacon body will be focusing on ways to increase connections with our church families.

Faithful Giving Moment

We continue to be grateful for the in-person community that we have cultivated week in and week out for so long so that in times like these, the good work of the church can continue. And it does continue! In this moment, where finances are not our primary concern, but they do remain in the back of all of our minds, we ask you to practice generosity by giving faithfully.

There are four ways to give right now:

1. The easiest way to give is online via the church's secure webpage (click on the green button at the end of this article). Please be sure to select "Highland's General Operating Fund." You can give a recurring gift this way, as well as a one-time gift.
2. The most cost-conscious way is to set up an automatic bill payment with your bank. This will send your gift to the church automatically in these stressful days, and best of all, no fees—which allows us to be a better steward of your gifts when all seems uncertain.
3. You may mail your check to the church office at 1101 Cherokee Road, Louisville, KY 40204, Attn: Kathleen Gordon.
4. It is still okay to drop off a check or cash at the church office. Ring the bell by the Educational Doors between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and someone will come to the door to receive it.

Thank you always for your faithful gifts, especially in these days!

[Click here for secure online giving](#)

Looking Back on Holy Ground

Throughout September, fifty-five people from Highland have explored Holy Ground through weekly emails with five paths: reading *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, thinking deeper about Mary Alice's sermons, exploring art curated by Tory Parker, exploring Psalm 105, and being led by Vicki Runnion in Zoom conversations. To offer you a glimpse of our time together, below are links from our exploration of Psalm 105 and artwork inspired by Exodus. *I give thanks for Mary Alice, Tory, and Vicki's leadership that helped make our month-long faith formation possible.* ~ Carol Harston

- [Week One: Considering Our Country's History](#)
- [Week Two: Considering Our Personal History](#)
- [Week Three: Seeing Psalm 105 in the Present](#)
- [Week Four: Imagining the Stories our Children Will Tell](#)
- [Week One: Jacob Lawrence's Great Migration Series](#)
- [Week Two: Ed Hamilton](#)
- [Week Three: Dorothea Lange and Ebony G. Patterson](#)
- [Week Four: Miriam's Cup](#)



We are not alone: Why I wrote *Just Faith: Reclaiming Progressive Christianity* by Guthrie Graves Fitzsimmons

I hear a similar story from progressive Christians all around the country. It goes something like this: I love my church and the work we are doing in our community, but it feels like we are the outliers in Christian America. The Christian leaders who get the most attention are those who distort the Gospel to use it to condemn and divide people. I have heard a version of this at every church I have been a member of since growing up in Houston, living in Washington, DC, going to seminary in New York City, and now at Highland Baptist. While there certainly



are a lot of people who hijack the Good News of Jesus Christ, there are also millions and millions of progressive Christians in our country putting our faith into action for social justice. You will find churches that share our church's commitments in every major city and many smaller towns from coast to coast. We are not alone.

I wrote *Just Faith: Reclaiming Progressive Christianity* as a love letter to my fellow progressive Christians. Generations of Christians have gone before us and did their best to live out their faith. I share stories of their work and connect them to my own experiences and current events in the first part of the book. The second half is my call to action to reclaim our faith in the public square. Each of us has a role to play—ministers, deacons, laypeople, Bible study classes, mission teams, and more!



Releasing a book during this coronavirus crisis has been odd—but I've enjoyed the opportunity to connect with people online. Staying connected to Highland Baptist Church has also been a source of comfort during the pandemic. I have continued to connect with my Bible study class, the Deacons, and in the worship chat box with so many of you. I hope you will join me, Carol Harston, and Lauren Jones Mayfield for a discussion about the book tomorrow, September 30, on Facebook at 2:00 p.m. I will share more about the book and hopefully take some of your questions! [Click here to read more about my book and to purchase a copy!](#)
